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ABSTRACT

According to a 1981 questionnaire survey of 2,554 heads of rural households in 10 Southern states, rural people perceived that the most serious barriers to securing employment in Southern rural areas were job shortages, lack of personal or political contacts, insufficient training or education, and lack of job information. Respondents perceived the lack of transportation and discrimination on the basis of age, race, or sex to be less significant barriers. Analysis of socioeconomic factors on responses revealed that while 53.7% of respondents perceived job shortages as a serious barrier, occupational status particularly affected those perceptions. Another barrier, knowing the right people, perceived as serious by 36% of the respondents, was affected by race, educational level, poverty status, and occupational level. Those factors and respondent's sex affected perceptions of the lack of job information, the lack of transportation, and age discrimination as employment barriers. Respondents' sex, race, and poverty status affected their perceptions of racial discrimination; sex and race affected their perceptions of sex discrimination; and race affected perceptions of insufficient training or education, a serious barrier for 34.6% of all respondents. The availability of gainful employment may minimize the perceived major problems of securing employment in the rural South. (SB)

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PROBLEMS IN SECURING EMPLOYMENT IN THE RURAL SOUTH AND SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

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Introduction

Over the past two decades, rural America has benefited from three major structural developments: rapid expansion of transportation and telecommunication systems, improved employment opportunities, and diversification of employment opportunities (Garkovich, 1982). These developments are the direct result of rural development efforts through rural industrialization. To improve employment opportunities further, "rural community leaders continue to focus development efforts upon attracting new business and industry...in their areas" (Carter, 1982: 460). Such efforts are also politically supported by the federal and state governments as their major policy objectives (Rosenblatt, 1964; Summers et al., 1976; Vlasin, 1969; Wallace, 1969). The results were conspicuous in some ways. For example, between 1960 and 1970 rural industrial employment achieved a 22 percent growth rate, while urban industrial employment increased by only 4 percent (Summers et al., 1976). The decade of the 1970s also witnessed the continuing growth of rural economy with employment increasing twice as fast in rural than urban areas of America (Council on Environmental Quality, 1976; Economic Development Division, 1978). This rapid growth of employment opportunities also accompanied the diversification of employment opportunities in rural areas (Fitzsimmons et al., 1980).

However, it is equally true that many rural areas of the South still remain heavily affected by a high rate of poverty (Deavers and

Brown, 1979). In other words, not all rural areas in the South have benefited from the increased employment opportunities. In addition, as many studies pointed out, local rural residents generally receive very few new jobs (Little and Lovejoy, 1979; Lovejoy, 1980; Nolan and Heffernan, 1974; Summers et al., 1976), even though employment opportunities and diversified employment have increased considerably due to the recent rapid economic growth in rural America. These opportunities tend to be captured by new inmigrants from urban areas (Gray and Flinn, 1978) and serve as "a pressure valve for urban areas whereby the unemployed, a potential problem, are siphoned off" (Lovejoy and Krannich, 1982; 485-6). Furthermore, according to the dependency theory, the urban areas exploit their rural counterparts by directing certain industries into rural areas and paying local workers low wages, thereby, generating large amounts of profit or surplus capital, which is quickly diverted to the urban areas (Baran, 1957; Frank, 1966, 1967, 1969). This vicious cycle must have been partly responsible for the tedious development and stagnation of economy, and for the detriment of residents in particular, in economically depressed rural areas of the South.

In fact, the incidence of poverty continues to be significantly higher in rural than urban America. Nearly 35 percent of the poor in America were rural in 1975, and all of the counties which have been among the poorest 20 percent since 1950 are rural. But rural poverty is heavily concentrated in the South. In 1979, "237 of the 255 counties that have fallen into the lowest 20 percent of rural

counties by income rank in each decade since 1950 are located in the region" (Deavers and Brown, 1979: 5).

From an economic perspective, such high rates of rural poverty in the South are in large part related to high rates of unemployment, underemployment, or discouraged workers in the region. The high rate of unemployment has been a serious cause of the chronic and persistent poverty in the region. In their study based on a comprehensive personal interview survey of residents in Gadsden County, a rural county in Florida, Korsching and Sapp (1977) reported 20 percent of the labor force unemployed, which was much higher than the official unemployment estimates. Underemployment has been another serious socioeconomic problem in rural areas. The concept of underemployment here includes two types of worker: full-time workers whose wages are not sufficient to provide them with adequate income, and those workers who are engaged in involuntary part-time employment because they could not find full-time work. Deavers and Brown (1979) found that 25 percent of poor rural households are headed by a full-time worker and nearly one-third of poor rural households are supported by two or more workers, suggesting that underemployment is a widespread practice among rural labor forces.

Carter (1982) called the official labor force estimates in three rural counties of Florida inaccurate and inadequate, and reported that over 30 percent of the local labor force are underemployed and that a large number of unemployed but able-bodied persons in the rural counties who are excluded from official

estimates can be characterized as "unemployed discouraged workers." No accurate measures of discouraged workers in rural areas are readily available (Nilsen, 1979). However, it is widely believed that these types of workers are particularly "prominent in depressed rural areas where job opportunities are scarce; where few employers exist, and hence active job search need be of short duration; and where low-income self-employment in farming allows subsistence living" (Tweeten, 1982: 181).

In spite of the continuous emphasis on improving employment opportunities to enhance the quality of life for rural people, the lack of jobs and widespread practice of underemployment still continue to be serious problems in the rural South. However, little attention has been given to the subjective evaluations of rural people about problems in securing employment in their communities. The measures of rural economic development and official estimates of rural labor forces do not necessarily reflect real problems rural people encounter when they look for a job in their community. The objective of this study is to examine variations in the nature and the extent of seriousness of the perceived problems in securing employment in Southern rural communities. This study focuses on the perceptions of rural people toward employment problems. It further seeks to explore the relationship between problems in securing employment and socioeconomic characteristics in order to ascertain the policy-relevant implications for providing employment opportunities in economically depressed rural communities in the South.

Methods

Data were collected in 1981 as part of a region-wide questionnaire survey of 2554 heads of rural households selected by state level random cluster sampling in ten Southern states (South Carolina, North Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Georgia, Florida, Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky). The first stage of sampling in each state was to be a systematic random sample of three racially mixed (minimum 400 black population except Kentucky), low-income (lower 35%), and rural (70%) counties. The probability of a county's selection was to be in proportion to its population size within each state's sampling frame of rural low-income counties. Furthermore, to insure a range of counties with respect to racial composition, the counties listed in each state's sampling frame were ordered systematically with a random start located between zero and one-third of the total population of all counties on each state's list.

For the second stage, random cluster sampling was used for the selection of 30 clusters per state. For simplicity in implementation, the first eight households within the defined, but open-ended boundaries of each cluster were designated as sample households. As a result, a minimum of 30 clusters and 240 households were sampled in each state. A comparison of a key parameter (race) between the samples and their population leads to a conclusion that the samples are generally representative at the local, state, and regional levels (1890 Land Grant Regional Research Publication No. 1. Isolation of

Factors Related to Levels and Patterns of Living in Low-Income Areas of the Rural South: A Basebook: 1983).

During the questionnaire interview, heads of the sampled households were asked to respond with one of three responses to eight widely assumed problems in securing employment in their community. The question asked is as follows:

> "I am going to read some statements to you about problems in securing employment---After each statement, please tell me whether you think this represents a "serious problem," is "somewhat a problem," or is "not a problem" in securing employment in your community.
>
> 1. discrimination by age
> 2. discrimination by race
> 3. discrimination by sex
> 4. limited job opportunities
> 5. lack of transportation
> 6. not enough training or education to get a good job
> 7. knowing where to look for a job
> 8. knowing the right people."

In the following analysis, the study mainly addresses two major concerns. First, what is the region-wide extent of seriousness of each of the eight problems in securing employment in Southern rural communities as perceived by Southern rural population? In order to analyze and measure the extent of seriousness in terms of the eight problems, responses of the heads of households were converted into the form of a five-point scale. This scale designates 5 points to each "serious problem" response, 3 points to each "somewhat a problem" response, and 1 point to each "not a problem" response. Subsequently, average mean scores were computed for each problem for the region. This method provides summary statistics which indicate the extent and direction of seriousness for each of the

problems. In other words, average mean scores closer to 5 indicate a serious problem, while average mean scores closer to 1 indicate no problem at all. Meanwhile, the average mean score of 3 indicates "somewhat a problem."

Secondly, this study examines the relationships of key socio-economic factors (sex, race, age, education, occupation, and poverty status) with the extent of perceived seriousness of the eight problems. Various subgroups of sex, race, age, and education are self-explanatory. Occupation was trichotomized as follows: white collar workers who are employed as professionals, managers (except farm), administrators, clerical, or sales workers; blue collar workers are those employed as craftsmen, operatives, or laborers; and farmers are those who identified themselves as farmers, farm managers, or farm laborers. Poverty status is determined here by the use of the federal government's definition of poverty income based on 1980 prices with family size and farm or nonfarm incomes in consideration.

Two statistical tests were used here for examination of the relationship between socioeconomic variables and problems in securing employment. To decide whether socioeconomic variables were systematically related to perceived seriousness of problems, the study employed two-variable chi-square test of statistical significance at alpha levels of .05, .01, .005 and .001. It also computed the value of gamma to assess the strength, and to determine the direction, of the relationships.

Findings

The frequency distributions of heads of Southern rural households in terms of their perceived seriousness of eight major problems when seeking a job in their community are presented in Table 1. Of the eight problems, as expected, the problem of "limited job opportunities" was most frequently pointed out as a serious problem in the rural South. More than one half of the rural residents felt this to be the case. The second most frequently mentioned serious problem was "knowing the right people by more than a third of the population (36 percent). The problem of "not enough training or education for good job" was also mentioned as serious by more than a third of the rural people (34.6%). Following these three problems was the problem of "knowing where to look for a job" with almost one quarter of the people (24.3%) perceiving it as a serious problem. However, as Table 1 reveals, problems such as "lack of transportation" and "discrimination by race, age or sex" were mentioned as a serious problem by less than 20 percent of the people, ranging from 11.6 percent to 19.4 percent. As shown in Table 1, the least frequently mentioned serious problem in the rural South was "discrimination by sex" with 11.6 percent.

On the other hand, it is interesting to point out from Table 1 that more than a third of Southern rural people felt that all the eight problems are somewhat a problem to them when looking for a job in their community, ranging from 32.8 percent for "lack of transportation" to 47 percent for "knowing where to look for a job." Furthermore, it is interesting to note here that more than one half of the people in the rural South considered "discrimination by race or sex" as not a problem

at all in securing employment. On the contrary, only 12.2 percent of the rural people felt that "limited job opportunities" are not a problem at all to them.

The conversion of responses into the five-point scale also indicates some interesting rates and patterns of the perceived seriousness of the eight problems as shown in Figure I. On the region wide average, problems such as "limited job opportunities," "knowing the right people," and "not enough training or education" were perceived as more than somewhat a problem, while the problem of "knowing where to look for a job" as somewhat a problem (2.91). But the remaining four problems were on average perceived as less than somewhat a problem.

From the above analyses, it appears clearly that the most serious problems to the Southern rural people in securing employment are extreme job shortage, lack of personal or political contacts, insufficient training or education, and lack of job information in descending order. But lack of transportation, discrimination by race, age or sex were not as serious as the other four in the rural South in general.

Discrimination by Age

In general, job discrimination by age affects both children and the aged. In the rural South, it seems more likely to be a problem to the elderly than the youth. "Most young people work in...jobs with low wages, requiring menial work" (Bowers, 1979:5),

and in rural areas the jobs with low wages are most readily available for youths (Falk, 1981). On the contrary, the elderly as a "newly discovered" minority group in America is subjected to employment discrimination and other variety of socioeconomic disadvantages (Robertson, 1980). The scarcity of employment opportunities in the rural South, and in economically depressed rural areas in the South in particular, further aggravates job opportunities of the rural elderly. In the rural South, as shown in Table 1, 15.4 percent of all the respondents perceived discrimination by age as a serious problem in securing employment in their community, while 38.2 percent felt it as somewhat a problem. On the region-wide average, it is interesting to note, as shown in Figure I, that discrimination by age (2.38) appears to be somewhat more a problem than discrimination by race (2.31) and discrimination by sex (2.13) in the rural South.

A closer examination of Table 2 reveals some interesting patterns of the relationship between the problem of discrimination by age and each of the six socioeconomic variables examined here. Proportionately, females, black, older people, lesser educated people, and the poor were likely to perceive the problem more seriously than their respective counterparts in their community, while three occupational subgroups showed little differences. Of these five significantly related variables, however, race shows its strongest relationship with the problem (gamma .28), followed by sex (gamma -.19) and poverty status (gamma -.16), indicating that the problem is more frequently and strongly felt by blacks than any other

subgroups examined here in the rural South.

Discrimination by Race

Even though Civil rights laws have helped blacks make some progress in recent years, blacks still are disadvantaged economically compared to whites. Especially, Southern rural blacks as the largest ethnic minority group in rural America are severely afflicted by socioeconomic deprivation and institutionalized discrimination (Fratoe, 1980; Durant and Knowlton, 1978). In fact, racial discrimination in employment has been a serious institutionalized discrimination in America in general, and in the rural South in particular. Racial discrimination in employment includes job discrimination against blacks as well as practices such as banning blacks from promotion and restricting them to low-paying jobs. In the rural South today, discrimination by race in employment remains a serious problem, even though more than two-thirds of whites believe that "a lot of progress" has been achieved in getting rid of racial discrimination in America (Robertson, 1980).

As Table 1 indicates, 16.6 percent of all the respondents in the rural South still considered discrimination by race in employment as a serious problem, while almost one third of them believed it as somewhat a problem. As shown in Table 3, the problem of discrimination by race was perceived more acutely by females, blacks, the less educated, blue collar workers, and the poor than their respective counterparts. But as anticipated, the problem was most keenly

perceived by blacks (gamma .62), compared with the other socioeconomic subgroups examined here. In fact, almost one third of blacks (31.9%) in the rural South believed that there has been a serious racial discrimination in employment practices in their community, whereas only 7.3 percent of whites felt this to be the case.

Discrimination by Sex

With steadily declining birth rate in America in recent decades, the number of women in the labor force has increased rapidly, even though they are restricted mostly to low-paying jobs. Furthermore, women often find themselves in situations where certain career opportunities are closed to them and at almost all levels wages for them are lower than males for equal work. This traditional sex discrimination in employment and income has changed little and still remains basic to the maintenance of existing sex roles in America, while the expectations of women are rising steadily. This pattern of job discrimination against women is conspicuous in rural America too. While the number of rural women entering the paid labor force has been rapidly rising in recent years, their employment opportunities in rural America are largely limited to low-skilled and low-wage works and industries (Bokemeier et al., 1980; Brown and O'Leary, 1979; Sweet, 1972).

In this study, however, the problem of sex discrimination in employment appeared to be least serious as perceived by the Southern rural population in comparsion with the other problems examined here.

As Table 4 indicates, more than a majority of every subgroup except blacks, ranging from 50% of females to 62% of whites, felt it as not a problem at all in their community. On the other hand, The race factor again showed the strongest relationship to the problem (gamma .38), followed by sex (gamma -.15). This indicates that the problem is perceived most strongly and frequently by rural blacks in the South, followed by rural women, compared to the other subgroups examined here.

Limited Job Opportunities

Despite considerable socioeconomic progress and continuous efforts to improve the levels of living in rural America in recent years, the rural South continues to be characterized by the scarcity of employment opportunities, high rates of poverty, and lower income. As Tweeten (1982: 1975) argued, "gainful employment is critical to raise earnings of individuals and communities, alleviate underemployment, and provide the means to acquire public and private services in rural areas." But gainful employment is not available sufficiently in many parts of the rural South. This scarcity of employment opportunities is clearly manifested by the extent of seriousness of the problem of "limited job opportunities" perceived by the Southern rural population.

Of eight problems asked, the problem of "limited job opportunities" was perceived by the respondents most seriously. As shown in Table 1, more than a half of the Southern rural population (53.7%)

believed that the problem is really serious in their community, while more than one third of them (34.1%) considered it somewhat a problem. A close examination of the data in Table 5 reveals little difference among all the subgroups of the six socioeconomic variables examined here in terms of the extent of their perceived seriousness of the problem. In other words, the problem was felt almost equally and strongly by every socioeconomic subgroup in the rural South, with more than a half of each subgroup perceiving it as a serious problem in their community except farmers. In the case of farmers, nevertheless, 46.2 percent felt this to be the case in their community.

Lack of Transportation

The availability of private transportation to rural labor forces is crucial for obtaining and holding a job, because few rural public transit systems are in operation today. But, as Ira Kaye (1982) pointed out, more than 20 percent of the people in low-income rural areas have no access to any kind of transportation. From these statistics, it may be assumed that a considerably large number of rural people in the South, particularly minorities and other socio-economically disadvantaged persons, face a serious difficulty in terms of transportation when they attempt to seek a job in their community or in their neighboring counties.

In the rural South, as anticipated, lack of transportation appears to be a serious problem to almost 20 percent of the respondents and somewhat a problem to almost one third of them. An analysis of the data also indicates, as shown in Table 6, that females, blacks,

the aged, the less-educated, farmers, and the poor are much more likely to have transportation problem than their respective counterparts in securing employment. But, as the values of gamma in Table 6 shows, the problem appears to be more acute among blacks (gamma .44), followed by the poor (gamma -.30) and females (gamma -.27), than any other subgroups examined here in the rural South.

Not Enough Training or Education

As pointed out earlier, the problem of "not enough training or education" is perceived by the Southern rural population as a considerably serious problem, which keeps them from being employed in a decent job in their community. The extent of seriousness of the problem is well manifested by more than 30 percent of every socioeconomic subgroup perceiving it as a serious problem, while by more than 40 percent of every subgroup considering it somewhat a problem, as shown in Table 7. An analysis of the data also reveals that proportionately females, blacks, the young people, the less educated blue collar workers and the poor perceived the problem more seriously than their respective counterparts. However, the values of gamma in Table 7 indicate that there appear no distinctive variations among the subgroups of each socioeconomic group examined here except between blacks and whites (gamma .17). In other words, the problem is almost equally and acutely perceived by almost all the subgroups. In the meantime, as shown in Table 7, less than one quarter of every subgroup, ranging from 18 to 23.8 percent,

felt that they do not have problem in getting a good job in terms of their training or education.

Knowing Where to Look for a Job

In general, the problem of "knowing where to look for a job" was perceived as "somewhat a problem" in the rural South. As appeared in Table 8, more than 45 percent of every subgroup examined here said that they have somewhat a problem in terms of job information. Furthermore, a considerable number of every socio-economic subgroup examined here, ranging from 17.4 percent of white collar workers to 34.8 percent of blacks, revealed their complete ignorance about how to obtain job information, saying that the problem is a really serious matter to them. Proportionately, the problem appears to be more serious among females, blacks, the less educated, blue collar workers and the poor than their respective counterparts, as shown in Table 8. An examination of the values of gamma reveals, however, that the problem is perceived most acutely by blacks (gamma .32), followed by the poor (gamma -.20), females (gamma -.16) and the less educated (gamma .15). These findings suggest that in the rural South a large number of blacks, the poor, females, and the less educated still are neither aware of how to seek a job information nor having no access to any kind of employment information service, public or private, in their community.

Knowing the Right People

As pointed out earlier, it is interesting to note here that in the rural South the problem of "knowing the right people" was perceived as the second most serious problem in securing employment in their community. It suggests that many rural people in the South still consider getting an employment as a result of patron-client or personal relationships or through political patronage system rather than through the merit system.

As revealed in Table 8, almost more than one third of every socioeconomic subgroup examined here, ranging from 31.1 percent of white collar workers to 42.3 percent of blacks, perceived the problem as a serious matter, while more than 40 percent of all the subgroups felt it as somewhat a problem. A closer examination of the data further reveals that proportionately the problem is perceived more acutely among blacks, the less educated, blue collar workers and the poor than their respective counterparts in the rural South. According to the values of gamma in Table 9, the problem once again was most keenly perceived by blacks (gamma .19), followed by the poor (gamma -.15), as compared with other socioeconomic subgroups examined here in the rural South.

Conclusion

In recent decades, the structure of Southern rural employment has progressively become more diverse and less agricultural. Accordingly, people in the rural South make their living from a

variety of economic activities. This trend is reflected in the distribution of our samples into different major occupational subgroups with 35.8 percent as white collar workers, 42.4 percent as blue collar workers and 21.8 percent as farmers. Nevertheless, the data also reveal that 42.3 percent of our samples live under the poverty level, which is twice as high as the official estimate of Southern rural poverty in 1975--over 20 percent of the Southern rural population living in poverty (Deavers and Brown, 1979). This indicates that rural areas from which our samples were drawn are economically depressed and low-income communities in the rural South. People, and particularly poor people, in such areas must suffer many socioeconomic and political disadvantages--low educational attainment, few marketable vocational skills, physical and social isolation, lack of a wide range of employment opportunities, underemployment, lack of adequate community and governmental services.

These disadvantages are widely experienced by a considerably large number of our sample even in relation to employment practices. As we observed in the preceding analysis, the most serious and detrimental problems the Southern rural population most often encounters when they seek jobs are (1) insufficient employment opportunities in their community, (2) physical or social isolation, (3) low educational attainment and few marketable vocational skills, (4) lack of adequate community or public services for job information in declining order.

To a large extent, it has been true that the labor and employ-

ment policy of the U.S. government was oriented to benefit the urban areas. Consequently, rural labor forces have not been adequately provided with effective employment and training programs. To this effect, Ray Marshall (1974:119) stated that "By whatever standard we judge manpower experiences, the evidence seems to support the conclusion that rural areas have been shortchanged in manpower efforts." Furthermore, as the data indicated, those who suffer most in securing employment in the rural South are blacks, the poor, female heads of households, the lesser educated, farm laborers, and to a lesser extent blue collar workers. Therefore, rural employment and labor policy needs to focus on a more comprehensive program intended to address the above-discussed needs of these particularly disadvantaged groups of the Southern rural population with special emphasis on the creation of diversified employment opportunities, the provision of vocational training and quality education, and the availability and accessability of job information.

To a lesser extent, Southern rural people also expressed their concerns about the lack of transportation as a kind of hindrance to their efforts to secure employment. As shown in Table 1, 19.4 percent perceived it as "a serious problem" while 32.8 percent viewed it as "somewhat a problem." In fact, the 19.4 percent for a serious problem is almost identical with that of the households without private transportation in low-income rural counties in America (Kaye, 1982). Lack of transportation represents the major obstacle to securing and holding a job in rural areas, particularly for blacks,

the poor, and other underpriviledged households. To overcome this hindrance, further research seems needed to address how economically depressed rural areas can provide transportation services no longer provided by the private sector particularly for those who are discouraged to look for a job or to go to work because of lack of transportation.

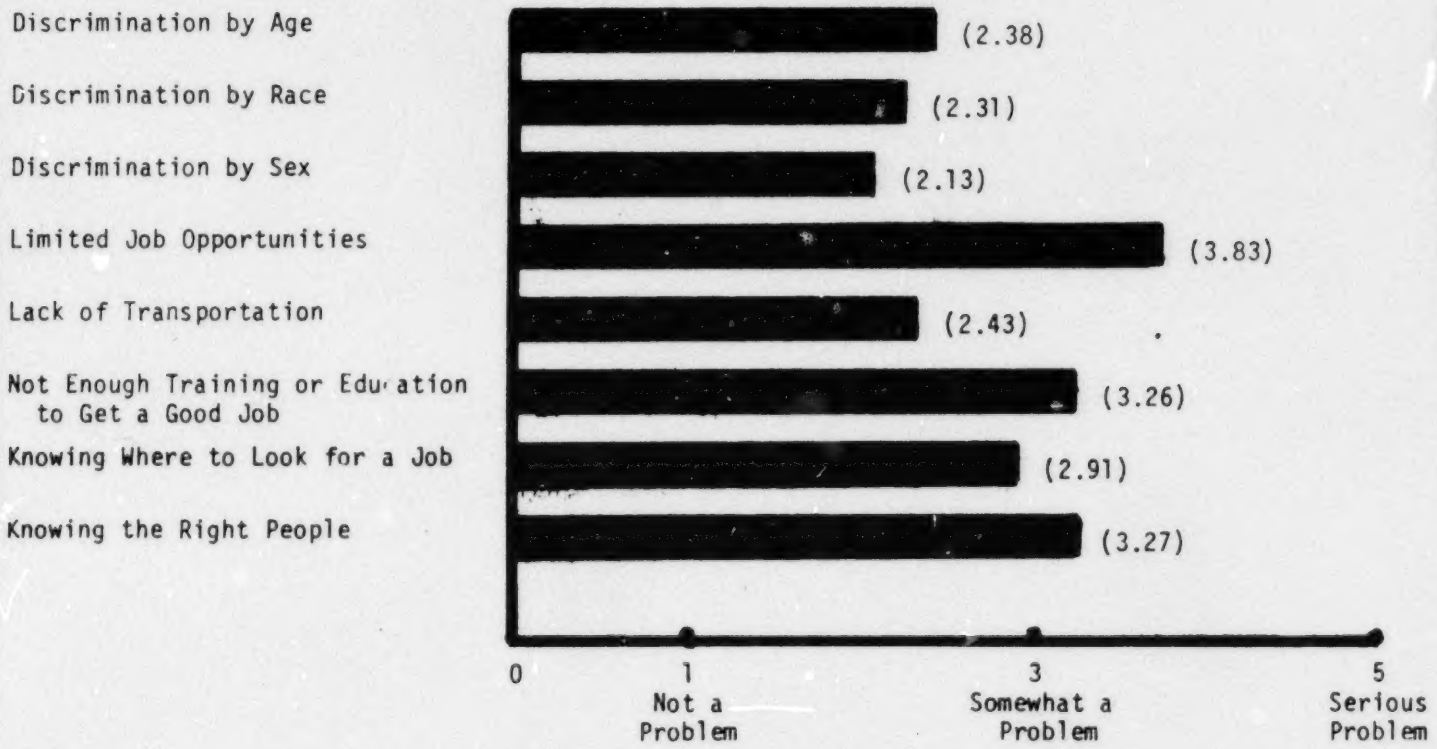
As pointed out earlier, discrimination by race, age, or sex is strongly perceived by some rural people, even though relatively small in number, as a major barrier to their efforts to obtain employment in their communities. The 1964 Civil Rights Act contains a section for "Equal Employment Opportunity" which prohibited several forms of discriminatory practices and created a five-member Equal Employment Opportunity Commission with enforcement authority. At the outset, its enforcement was somewhat delayed even though its urgency was evident. However, the provisions of the equal employment opportunity became effective gradually over several years and in general its impact continues to be substantial. However, it is equally true that some members of minorities and other disadvantaged social groups still feel that it fell short of their expectation. In the rural South, as the data indicated, a strong feeling of discrimination by race and sex is particularly prominent among blacks, female heads of households, and to a lesser extent the poor. The evidence seems to imply that gainful employment and decent standard of living can readily neutralize a feeling of discrimination among these socially underpriviledged people.

In summary, the analysis of the data leads us to a conclusion that all the major problems in securing employment preceived by Southern rural people and particularly socioeconomically disadvantaged people can be possibly minimized if gainful employment becomes available for all able-bodied workers, and for blacks in particular, in the rural South. In reality, "gainful employment is much more than a livelihood for individuals and an economic base for communities" (Tweeten, 1982:175). Therefore, it seems that more research is required to explore effective ways to improve the performance of public and private sectors in providing employment opportunities and other related services within the context of Southern rural environment.

Table 1. Observed Frequencies of Respondents in Terms of Their Perceived Seriousness of Eight Major Problems in Securing Empolyment in Rural South

Degrees of Seriousness	Serious Problem		Somewhat a Problem		Not a Problem		Total	
Problems	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Discrimination by Age	383	15.4%	952	38.2%	1159	46.4%	2494	100%
Discrimination by Race	415	16.6%	808	32.4%	1272	51.0%	2495	100%
Discrimination by Sex	291	11.6%	834	33.4%	1373	55.0%	2498	100%
Limited Job Opportunities	1341	53.7%	850	34.1%	305	12.2%	2496	100%
Lack of Transportation	483	19.4%	819	32.8%	1193	47.8%	2495	100%
Not Enough Training or Education for Good Job	861	34.6%	1093	43.9%	536	21.5%	2490	100%
Knowing Where to Look for a Job	604	24.3%	1170	47.0%	713	28.7%	2487	100%
Knowing the Right People	897	36.0%	1041	41.7%	555	22.3%	2493	100%

Figure 1. Average Scores of Perceived Seriousness of Eight Major Problems in Securing Employment in Rural Communities in the South *



*Seriousness is computed on five-point scale with 5 as "serious problem," 3 as "somewhat a problem," and 1 as "not a problem."

Table 2. Various Socioeconomic Groups and Their Degree of Perceived Seriousness of "Discrimination by Age" Problem in Securing Employment in Their Community

Socioeconomic Groups	N	Degree of Perceived Seriousness			Statistical Tests
		Serious (%)	Somewhat (%)	Not at All (%)	
Sex:					
Male	1645	13.1	37.1	48.9	x^2= 29.74, p<.001
Female	868	19.6	40.6	39.9	gamma=-.19
Race:					
Black	944	22.1	40.0	37.8	x^2= 72.63, p<.001
White	1549	11.1	37.1	51.8	gamma= .28
Age:					
18-39	816	11.6	37.0	51.3	x^2= 16.91, p<.005
40-59	798	17.2	39.0	43.9	gamma=-.09
60-90	865	16.9	38.6	44.5	
Education:					
0-7	610	19.3	38.7	42.0	x^2= 21.25, p<.001
8-11	834	16.9	36.6	46.5	gamma= .11
12 and more	1050	11.8	39.1	49.0	
Occupation:					
White collar	700	11.9	39.0	49.1	x^2= 8.33, n.s.
Blue collar	829	15.7	36.2	48.1	gamma=-.03
Farmer	423	11.8	42.1	46.1	
Poverty Status:					
Non-poor	1404	12.9	37.6	49.5	x^2= 20.58, p<.001
Poor	1034	18.8	39.1	42.2	gamma=-.15

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Table 3. Various Socioeconomic Groups and Their Degree of Perceived Seriousness of "Discrimination by Race" Problem in Securing Employment in Their Community

Socioeconomic Groups	N	Degree of Perceived Seriousness			Statistical Tests
		Serious (%)	Somewhat (%)	Not at All (%)	
Sex:					
Male	1420	15.2	31.0	53.8	x^2= 17.00, p<.001
Female	867	19.4	35.3	45.3	gamma=-.15
Race:					
Black	946	31.9	39.7	28.3	x^2=389.89, p<.001
White	1547	7.3	28.1	64.6	gamma= .62
Age:					
18-39	816	18.0	31.9	50.1	x^2= 3.30, n.s.
40-59	795	16.7	33.6	49.7	gamma= .04
60-90	869	15.4	31.6	52.9	
Education:					
0-7	613	19.1	34.6	46.3	x^2= 11.08, p<.05
8-11	833	16.3	29.4	54.3	gamma= .05
12 and more	1049	15.4	33.5	51.1	
Occupation:					
White collar	700	14.0	34.9	51.1	x^2= 9.78, p<.05
Blue collar	828	18.1	28.4	53.5	gamma= .01
Farmer	422	15.2	32.2	52.6	
Poverty Status:					
Non-poor	1406	15.4	31.4	53.2	x^2= 10.60, p<.005
Poor	1032	18.8	34.4	46.8	gamma=-.11

Table 4. Various Socioeconomic Groups and Their Degree of Perceived Seriousness of "Discrimination by Sex" Problem in Securing Employment in Their Community

Socioeconomic Groups	N	Degree of Perceived Seriousness			Statistical Tests
		Serious (%)	Somewhat (%)	Not at All (%)	
Sex:					
Male	1649	9.8	32.7	57.4	x^2= 20.07, p<.001
Female	868	15.1	34.9	50.0	gamma=-.15
Race:					
Black	947	19.4	37.7	42.9	x^2=129.13, p<.001
White	1550	6.8	31.0	62.2	gamma= .38
Age:					
18-39	817	13.2	34.4	52.4	x^2= 7.00, n.s.
40-59	799	10.8	34.3	54.9	gamma= .07
60-90	867	10.6	31.4	58.0	
Education:					
0-7	611	12.9	32.1	55.0	x^2= 11.14, p<.05
8-11	835	11.6	30.1	58.3	gamma=-.03
12 and more	1052	10.9	36.8	52.3	
Occupation:					
White collar	700	10.0	35.6	54.4	x^2= 3.26, n.s.
Blue collar	829	10.9	31.2	57.9	gamma= .03
Farmer	423	10.2	33.1	56.7	
Poverty Status:					
Non-poor	1407	10.6	34.5	54.9	x^2= 5.02, n.s.
Poor	1035	13.5	32.9	53.6	gamma=-.04

Table 5. Various Socioeconomic Groups and Their Degree of Perceived Seriousness of "Limited Job Opportunities" Problem in Securing Employment in Their Community

Socioeconomic Groups	N	Degree of Perceived Seriousness			Statistical Tests
		Serious (%)	Somewhat (%)	Not at All (%)	
Sex:					
Male	1647	53.2	34.5	12.3	x^2= .32, n.s.
Female	867	54.3	33.4	12.2	gamma=-.02
Race:					
Black	945	54.6	32.6	12.8	x^2= 1.71, n.s.
White	1549	52.8	35.1	12.1	gamma= .02
Age:					
18-39	816	56.9	31.1	12.0	x^2= 9.72, p<.05
40-59	795	54.8	33.8	11.3	gamma= .08
60-90	869	49.8	36.5	13.7	
Education:					
0-7	613	53.5	35.1	11.4	x^2= 10.80, p<.05
8-11	829	53.8	31.2	15.0	gamma=-.01
12 and more	1054	53.8	35.7	10.5	
Occupation:					
White collar	703	53.2	36.8	10.0	x^2= 24.35, p<.001
Blue collar	827	57.6	28.9	13.5	gamma= .06
Farmer	420	46.2	40.5	13.3	
Poverty Status:					
Non-poor	1409	53.5	35.1	11.4	x^2= 3.24, n.s.
Poor	1029	54.0	32.6	13.4	gamma= .01

Table 6. Various Socioeconomic Groups and Their Degree of Perceived Seriousness of "Lack of Transportation" Problem in Securing Employment in Their Community

Socioeconomic Groups	N	Degree of Perceived Seriousness			Statistical Tests
		Serious (%)	Somewhat (%)	Not at All (%)	
Sex:					
Male	1647	15.2	32.3	52.5	x^2= 64.97, p<.001
Female	867	27.3	33.6	39.1	gamma=-.27
Race:					
Black	944	31.4	35.5	33.2	x^2=183.62, p<.001
White	1550	12.1	31.1	56.8	gamma= .44
Age:					
18-39	814	17.9	34.6	47.4	x^2= 10.10, p<.05
40-59	796	20.5	28.3	51.3	gamma=-.02
60-90	870	19.9	34.0	46.1	
Education:					
0-7	612	24.5	35.9	39.5	x^2= 47.15, p<.001
8-11	836	22.4	31.0	46.7	gamma= .18
12 and more	1047	13.9	32.5	53.6	
Occupation:					
White collar	701	14.0	33.8	52.2	x^2= 14.77, p<.01
Blue collar	828	18.8	30.0	51.2	gamma=-.09
Farmer	425	20.5	35.3	44.2	
Poverty Status:					
Non-poor	1404	14.3	31.2	54.5	x^2= 78.00, p<.001
Poor	1035	26.3	35.1	38.6	gamma=-.30

Table 7. Various Socioeconomic Groups and Their Degree of Perceived Seriousness of "Not Enough Training or Education to Get a Good Job" Problem in Securing Employment in Their Community

Socioeconomic Groups	N	Degree of Perceived Seriousness			Statistical Tests
		Serious (%)	Somewhat (%)	Not at All (%)	
Sex:					
Male	1646	33.8	43.9	22.3	x^2= 2.55, n.s.
Female	863	36.2	44.0	19.8	gamma=-.05
Race:					
Black	940	39.9	42.1	18.0	x^2= 23.73, p<.001
White	1549	31.1	45.1	23.8	gamma= .17
Age:					
18-39	815	37.9	42.6	19.5	x^2= 8.11, n.s.
40-59	796	33.9	44.1	22.0	gamma= .08
60-90	865	31.8	44.9	23.4	
Education:					
0-7	610	37.9	43.6	18.5	x^2= 12.50, p<.05
8-11	832	36.7	44.7	21.6	gamma= .09
12 and more	1048	31.0	45.8	23.2	
Occupation:					
White collar	699	29.6	47.1	23.3	x^2= 12.73, p<.05
Blue collar	827	37.4	41.4	21.3	gamma=-.02
Farmer	422	29.9	46.4	23.7	
Poverty Status:					
Non-poor	1406	32.7	44.0	23.3	x^2= 9.21, p<.01
Poor	1030	37.7	43.3	19.0	gamma=-.10

Table 8. Various Socioeconomic Groups and Their Degree of Perceived Seriousness of "Knowing Where to Look for a Job" Problem in Securing Employment in Their Community

Socioeconomic Groups	N	Degree of Perceived Seriousness			Statistical Tests
		Serious (%)	Somewhat (%)	Not at All (%)	
Sex:					
Male	1641	21.7	47.4	30.9	x^2= 21.70, p<.001
Female	864	29.2	45.5	24.3	gamma=-.16
Race:					
Black	942	34.8	43.4	21.8	x^2=101.37, p<.001
White	1544	17.7	49.2	33.1	gamma= .32
Age:					
18-39	810	24.4	46.3	29.3	x^2= .48, n.s.
40-59	793	23.6	47.5	28.9	gamma=-.01
60-90	868	24.4	47.4	28.2	
Education:					
0-7	613	29.7	45.5	24.8	x^2= 31.83, p<.001
8-11	829	26.9	46.3	26.8	gamma= .15
12 and more	1045	19.0	48.5	32.4	
Occupation:					
White collar	695	17.4	50.4	32.2	x^2= 16.65, p<.005
Blue collar	827	25.6	45.9	28.4	gamma=-.09
Farmer	421	22.1	50.8	27.1	
Poverty Status:					
Non-poor	1400	20.3	48.2	31.5	x^2= 36.66, p<.001
Poor	1029	30.3	45.6	24.1	gamma=-.20

Table 9. Various Socioeconomic Groups and Their Degree of Perceived Seriousness of "Knowing the Right People" Problem in Securing Employment in Their Community

Socioeconomic Groups	N	Degree of Perceived Seriousness			Statistical Tests
		Serious (%)	Somewhat (%)	Not at All (%)	
Sex:					
Male	1646	35.0	41.9	23.1	x^2= 3.00, n.s.
Female	865	37.8	41.7	20.5	gamma=-.06
Race:					
Black	941	42.3	40.1	17.6	x^2= 31.32, p<.001
White	1552	32.2	43.0	24.8	gamma= .19
Age:					
18-39	815	36.3	40.7	22.9	x^2= 2.91, n.s.
40-59	793	37.5	41.1	21.4	gamma= .02
60-90	869	33.9	43.6	22.4	
Education:					
0-7	613	41.9	39.8	18.3	x^2= 18.77, p<.001
8-11	830	36.4	41.7	21.9	gamma= .12
12 and more	1050	32.2	43.0	24.9	
Occupation:					
White collar	702	31.1	42.6	26.4	x^2= 17.38, p<.005
Blue collar	826	40.0	40.1	20.0	gamma=-.07
Farmer	422	33.6	44.5	21.8	
Poverty Status:					
Non-poor	1403	33.7	41.7	24.6	x^2= 19.42, p<.001
Poor	1031	40.4	41.6	17.9	gamma=-.15